

From: Aquinas Hobor
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 1:19am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Renata B. Hesse
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
601 D Street NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Ms. Hesse:

I am writing to register my stand in the Microsoft Settlement as a citizen of the United States of America. I am currently a third-year at the University of Chicago, studying mathematics and computer science.

I have used many Microsoft products for over ten years; currently I use both Windows XP and Office XP, as well as Microsoft Money. Because I use these products, Microsoft has taken thousands of dollars from me, and it has been worth every penny. In fact, I would have been willing to pay double the price (and I do not have a lot of money.) Simply put, their products have greatly simplified my life, and I am very thankful. Their products are the best, both in terms of value and features. Windows (of various flavors) has always been easier to use than anything else out there, from MacOS to Linux to Solaris to HP-UX. I have used WordPerfect, Lotus Notes, and even the horrible Star Office. Microsoft Office is even more obviously superior among office products than Windows is among operating systems.

Every time I buy a product, I vote with my hard-earned dollars on a company. Like most other consumers, my overwhelming favorite is Microsoft. Our society is founded on the idea that each individual is capable of voting for a candidate to represent his political ideas. However, the Proposed Settlement characterizes US citizens as a helpless victims, unable to choose which products are best. How can I be considered worthy of electing people who can decide to fire nuclear weapons towards Afghanistan, and yet not be considered capable of deciding that Netscape is inferior to Internet Explorer? By what right does the Settlement propose to shackle me? Incidentally, I've noticed that Apple's Mac OS X ships with IE. Why is Microsoft's competitor allowed to use Microsoft's technology more freely than Microsoft is?

I've followed this case from the beginning, and from the very outset, it was neither consumers nor Microsoft's partners who brought suit: it was Microsoft's failing and failed competitors. To let failed businesses set the rules for successful ones in any market is wrong, but to let them set the rules in a sector that changes as fast as technology does

is disastrous. For years IBM dealt with antitrust regulators who did incalculable damage to IBM, its shareholders, and the general public. Ms. Heese, don't make Microsoft, its shareholders, and customers like me suffer the same unjust fate.

Moreover, a suit of this kind will only encourage companies of all kinds to court government favors, both to protect what they have earned (in the case of the most honest) and to take what they want from those less well-connected than they are (in the case of the shadier). This is a dangerous game, and only the most dishonest and politically wired companies can possibly win it. The Department of Justice should not be helping such people in any way.

Finally, I wish to inform the court that I am outraged that it is attacking Microsoft's property rights, not defending them. The proposed settlement is unjust: Microsoft's products have helped millions of people around the world, and the only proper course of action is to say, "Thank you" and let it go. Ms. Hesse, please let justice be served. Give Microsoft the thank you they have earned and let them continue doing what they do best.

Yours,
Aquinas Hobor